

Reply to Office Action dated December 19, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 32-42 are pending in the application. By this Amendment, claims 32, 37, and 39 are amended and claims 40-42 are added. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejected claims 32-39 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Curtis et al. (hereinafter "Curtis"), U.S. Patent No. 6,594,472 in view of Slipy et al. (hereinafter "Slipy"), U.S. Patent No. 5,848,152. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 32, 37, and 39 have been amended to recite that the pair of grooves extend substantially the length of the button portion. Neither Curtis nor Slipy, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest such features or the respective claimed combinations of independent claims 32, 37, and 39. That is, the Examiner refers to Fig. 2 of Curtis as disclosing the claimed pair of grooves. It has been assumed that the Examiner is referring to elements 28 or 29, shown more clearly in Figure 3. However, neither slots 28 nor channels 29 extend substantially the length of the button portion.

Additionally, neither Curtis nor Slipy, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest wherein the pair of grooves each comprises a fixing recess configured to mate with projections provided on the frames of the interchangeable button covers, as recited in claim 39. That is, neither slots 28 nor channels 29 include a fixing recess.

Further, it would not have been obvious to modify Curtis in view of Slipy as proposed by the Examiner to produce the respective claimed inventions of independent claims 32, 37, and 39. Curtis discloses a radiophone 1 including a front cover 2 that releasably attaches to an inner housing 4 by means of a snap-on connection. See col. 3, lines 23-25; col. 4, lines 4-34 of Curtis. The front cover 2 extends the full length of the radiophone 1. See Fig. 2 of Curtis. In contrast, Slipy discloses in Fig. 1 one embodiment of a similar radiophone 100 with a housing 102 which also extends the full length of the radiophone 100. Slipy discloses in Fig. 8 another embodiment of a radiophone 400 having a keypad cover 418 connected by a hinge 420 to a face plate 404. None of these separate embodiments of Curtis and Slipy, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a plurality of interchangeable button covers, each having a frame configured to mate with the pair of grooves, wherein the plurality of interchangeable button covers include a bar type button cover, a flip type button cover, and a slide type button cover, and wherein the button covers are just for covering the button portion, as recited in independent claim 32; a pair of grooves configured to receive interchangeably a plurality of interchangeable button covers, each having a frame configured to mate with the pair of grooves, the plurality of interchangeable button covers including a bar type button cover, a flip type button cover, and a slide type button cover, the button covers being just for covering the button portion, as recited in independent claim 37; or a pair of grooves are configured to receive interchangeably a plurality of interchangeable button covers, each having a frame configured to mate with the pair of grooves, wherein the pair of grooves each comprises a fixing recess configured to mate with projections

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provided on the frames of the interchangeable button covers, the button covers being just for covering the button portion, as recited in independent claim 39. Further, none of these separate embodiments of Curtis and Slipy disclose or suggest a slide type button cover at all. Furthermore, neither reference provides any motivation for combining the teachings as proposed by the Examiner to produce the respective claimed inventions of independent claims 32, 37, and 39. Thus, it is clear that the Examiner's proposed combination is based on impermissible hindsight gleaned from Applicant's own disclosure.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent claims 32, 37, and 39 over Curtis and Slipy should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 33-36, and 38, as well as added claims 40-42, are allowable over Curtis and Slipy at least for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 32, 37, and 39, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features. Further, neither Curtis nor Slipy, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest wherein the plurality of interchangeable button covers each further comprise a pair of projections configured to mate with corresponding fixing recesses disposed at upper ends of the plurality of grooves, as recited in dependent claim 33, or wherein the pair of grooves each comprises a fixing recess configured to mate with projections provided on the frames of the interchangeable button covers, as recited in dependent claim 38. Furthermore, neither Curtis nor Slipy, taken alone or in combination, disclose or suggest wherein the pair of projections are configured to slide along the length of the pair of grooves and then mate with the corresponding fixing recesses, as recited in dependent claim 40, or wherein the pair of grooves is configured to receive the pair of projections such that

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they slide along the length of the pair of grooves and then mate with the corresponding fixing recesses, as recited in dependent claims 41-42.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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